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EAST CENTRAL AFRICA

PART IV

THE NILOTES OF THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN AND UGANDA

by

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[TITLE PAGE]

Part II

THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION, POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND MAIN CULTURAL FEATURES

INTRODUCTION

The structure and organisation of the Nilotic tribal groups, though showing similarities in many respects and suggesting a certain degree of progressive variation from one or two structural types, cannot be considered in one descriptive whole owing to the complexity of the subject. It is therefore proposed to consider the main Nilotic groups in turn and in conclusion to point out some of the features common to all.

Except where specifically mentioned, the information relating to a people applies to their indigenous organisation.

THE SHILLUK

GENERAL

The Shilluk live in a number of hamlets and settlements which, almost without a break, line the west bank of the White Nile from about 11°N. Lat. to Lake No in the south. There are also a few settlements on the east bank and along the lower reaches of the Sobat river.

They are predominantly agricultural and sedentary, owning comparatively few cattle. The long river frontage of their habitat gives them adequate water and grazing in the dry season for the few cattle they do possess. There are no large scale transhumant movements in the dry season to find cattle pastures. Only youths go into dry season cattle camps which are situated mainly on islands in the river or in dry water-courses near it. The cultivations are likewise nearby, either in the settlement area or inland a short distance away. Ecological conditions therefore enable the people to remain in the same place all the year round and render the settlement areas self-contained economically.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS AND KINSHIP UNITS

The homestead (gol)

The *gol* is the smallest social unit in the tribe and usually consists of about two huts encircled by a fence. Every married man has a *gol* which he occupies with his wife, or wives, and children. In addition

there may be a dependent relative or friend. A man's sons live in his homestead until they get married; if their father is dead, they live in the *gol* of their eldest brother or in that of their father's married brother. The owner of the homestead is the head of the *gol*; he holds the [illegible] and is responsible for the behaviour of the members of his *gol*. He has to pay cattle in compensation for any wrong which may be committed by any of the members.

The Hamlet (pw)

Hamlets are built about 100 yards apart on high ground parallel to the river. They vary considerably in size according to the number of homesteads which compose them. The homesteads of a hamlet are grouped round a cattle kraal containing a hut which shelters all the herds in the rainy season. The byre and hut are used as the general meeting-places and social centres for the inhabitants at all times and guests are entertained there. There is often a *gon*, a hut with no surrounding fence, which is used as a dormitory by the unmarried men. The hamlet is a homogeneous unit being an extended family group or a small lineage.

The Settlement (yoth)

The settlement consists of a number of hamlets, occupied by different lineages. There are several hundred settlements, often not spacially distinct from one another. There is, however, a structural division which is recognised by the people themselves in referring to the settlement units. In spite of lineage differentiations within each settlement, all unite to defend the whole, all take part in the ritual of the age-set organisation, all participate in the settlement's relations with other settlements and all acknowledge a common chief.

The lineage organisation within a settlement revolves round two recognised types of lineages: the *dyil* and the *yoth*. It is said that Nyikang, the Shilluk culture hero and founder of the present Shilluk tribe, originally granted each settlement to a clan. The surviving descendants of the grantees are considered the 'owners of the soil' and are termed *dyil* to distinguish them from lineages which settled on their land later and which are called *yoth*. If the original owners of the land are extinct, the *yoth* lineage next in importance takes their place and becomes *dyil*. The members of the *dyil* lineage are closely associated with the land they occupy and are accorded considerable prestige and authority in virtue of their position and this association. The *dyil* form the core of the settlement and political activities revolve round them. The *yoth* lineage members are not socially inferior, but the *dyil* lineages have greater prestige and are expected to be the leaders in important matters in the settlement. For this reason the *dyil* of a settlement is the 'dominant lineage'.

The chief of the settlement, the *reth*, is taken from the *dyil* lineage. In practice, it occasionally happens that the dominant position of the *dyil* lineage is taken over by a stronger, wealthier, and more numerous lineage but, even if dispossessed of political power and the chieftainship, the original *dyil* lineage retains its ritual connection with the soil and also much of its local prestige. This ritual relationship remains so long as any living representatives of the original *dyil* lineage remain.

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The Shilluk settlement is open, on the other hand, to certain structural weaknesses which follow from its internal organisation. These are pointed out by Pumphrey.(1) Each weth kinship group has a dual loyalty, to its own lineage and to the settlement as represented by the *jago* and the dominant lineage. Only if the settlement chief and his lineage are strong are the loyalties of the weth's lineage members to their larger unit. The cohesion of the settlement is, however, favoured in the rainy season owing to the fact that travelling is difficult and the community tends to be isolated. At such times the influence of the Shilluk *reth* is diminished and he has to rely on the loyalty of the settlement chief; isolation also increases the feeling of unity and the Shilluk clans, being dispersed and without territorial cohesion, are placed at a disadvantage.

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Each lineage represented within a settlement has its original hamlet, the *pun dwong*, founded by the original immigrant who started the lineage in the settlement, and this is at the head of all hamlets of the lineage which have subsequently been formed in the settlement. The lineage head is the chief of the *pun dwong* and represents his lineage in the administration of the settlement unit. New hamlets are continually being founded by ambitious young men - usually in the same settlement as the parent hamlet and subservient to it, but occasionally they are started in another part of the country. The offshoots from the original hamlet (*pun dwong*) in the same settlement are called *nyoic nyer* and are included under the name of the original hamlet, but if some grow important and large they will acquire separate names. Some originally powerful hamlets may eventually disintegrate altogether.

The lineages, and therefore the hamlets within a settlement, are closely related through kinship ties of one sort and another. A common feature in many lineage systems, and one which is also found among the Shilluk, is that the descendents of a man who has settled with his wife's people trace their descent through the female link to the lineage in whose home they live. Howell quotes specific instances in which this occurred in a settlement.(2)

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The weth lineages are thus grafted on to the dominant lineages of a settlement. Intermarriage occurs between members and relationship is traced through female links, the weth lineage becoming 'sister's sons', and thus the structural differentiation within a settlement is greatly mitigated. The settlement is an integrated unit bound together by territorial unity, common economic and legal interests, allegiance to one chief and to a dominant lineage to which all are connected in some way, and finally, bound by the necessity of mutual co-operation during the rainy season and in times of danger from outside sources. To counterbalance this, there are lineage loyalties and lines of structural cleavage within the settlement. These, in certain circumstances, such as weak leadership and dissatisfaction with their representation by the chief to the central authority, may cause the settlement unit to be rent by internal feuds and fissions.

Divisions

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There are 11 divisions as follows:-(3)

(1) Pumphrey, J.R.A.I. 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.7. (2) Howell, J.R.A.I. 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.55.
(3) Howell and Thompson, J.R.A.I. 1948, Vol.XXVII, Fig.2.

NORTHERN PROVINCE (GERR)

631 Lhomo Dolalajak Athodoni Dotuk Golbany Fashoda

SOUTHERN PROVINCE (LUAK)

Wau Ahlakal Dotin Panyikang Tung

These have little political importance though they are said to have been made by the order of Nyikang. They have the tradition of co-operation when necessary to meet a common danger or a difficult situation. This tendency of contiguous settlements to combine for warfare was utilised by the Turkish government and is now used by the Anglo-Egyptian government to form administrative units. Originally, the associations were not permanent enough to be regarded as politically important.

The Provinces

Shilluk country is divided into two great provinces, Gerr and Luak (Northern Shillukland and Southern Shillukland), which are ritually important but have little administrative significance. The boundary dividing the two provinces is a water-course called Khor Arepajur, just south of Fashoda. The chief of Debalo Kwom, just south of Arepajur, is, through his office, the chief of Luak. The chief of the settlement of Golban, north of Khor Arepajur, is chief of Gerr.

Apart from these, only two other chiefs and divisions counted. These were the chiefs of the settlements forming the northernmost and southernmost regions of Shillukland, the chiefs of Lhomo and Tonga.(1) Fashoda, the capital of Shillukland, occupied by the *reth*, is the focal point of the structure of the Shilluk people and this is clearly seen, not only in administrative matters but in ritual and myth and in the circumstances surrounding the installation of the *reth*.

SOCIAL DIVISIONS

614 The Shilluk people are divided into four main classes or groups of clans:

The Kwareth

565 This is the royal clan, the largest of all clans and, like the others, is spread through all parts of the country. All members trace their descent, in the male line, from Nyikang and only a member of the royal clan 614 and one whose father has been a *reth* is eligible for election to the kingship. Within the *kwareth* are four main titles. 644

(a) *Reth* - The reigning king.
(b) *Nyireth* - The son or daughter of a *reth* - whether reigning or dead.

(1) See Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, p.9.

(c) *Nyareth* - The son of a *Nyireth*. 565
(d) *Kenyireth* - The grandson of a *Nyireth*. 614

In some regions the members of the royal clan have become more numerous than commoners and have supplanted them in the chieftainship of the settlements. This has been possible because the members of the royal clan are richer and tend to marry more wives, and also because of the system whereby the offspring of a *reth* are planted out in various settlements away from Fashoda. When one of the *reth*'s wives is about to give birth to a child she leaves Fashoda and goes to her own village. As soon as the *nyireth* is weaned he is placed in charge of some trustworthy settlement chief, often the mother's brother, and is brought up among his mother's people. When the child grows up and marries he builds a separate hamlet called *pa nyireth* (unless he is called on to become *reth*), and thus becomes the founder of a local lineage branch of the royal clan which may eventually grow powerful enough to overthrow the dominant lineage and assume the political aspects of its position in the settlement. 644 614 591 565

Daughters of a *reth* are not allowed to marry and therefore cannot start lineages which would count as sister's sons to the royal house. 644 582

The Oruru

This clan is separate from the royal clan and consists of the descendants of a disinherited branch. They are few in number and may intermarry with the royal clan. It is said that the *reth* still has the right to disinherit lineages of the royal clan but, apart from one traditional instance, it is not certain whether the right has been exercised. The *oruru* are indistinguishable from the commoner clans except for the special functions they perform for the *reth* at his investiture and at the time of his funeral. Traditionally, the *oruru* always smother the *reth* when he is ritually killed. The *reth* always takes some of his wives from the *oruru*. 565 614 643

The Bong Reth

The *bong reth* are the personal attendants of the *reth*. Originally they were captives from other tribes but later, volunteers from the commoner clans in Shillukland, if they were poverty stricken, might leave their own clans and become the *reth*'s retainers. In return for receiving cattle to marry with, they tended animals, engaged in building and cultivation and performed all the duties connected with the upkeep of the royal household. Apart from these and their descendants, the *bong reth* also included all those who were enslaved because their brothers were homicides, and those who became possessed by the spirit of Nyikang. 565 644 722 795 567 675

The *bong reth* are a fictitious clan; they cannot intermarry even though there is often no blood relationship among them. The *reth* never marries into the *bong reth* clan and, as an indication of the impossibility of this, he calls the daughter of a retainer *kwaro*, 'my grand-daughter'. 565 644 608 644

The *bong reth* live in a hamlet of their own near the capital in which the *reth* resides. When he dies they, together with his elderly widows, go and live near his shrine and look after it. When a *nyireth* is planted out, his father sends some of his retainers to live with him; these become *bong* 565 644 614

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nyireth and their descendants continue to live near those of the *nyireth* as a fictitious lineage.

The Colo

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The colo consists of the main body of Shilluk clans, of which there are about a hundred. They are patrilineal clans tracing descent from the original followers of Nyikang, and also from those who have since migrated into and settled in Shillukland or were in occupation when the Shilluk immigrants arrived under Nyikang's leadership. Their origins are obscured in myth.

The colo clans like the *kwareth* are patrilineal and exogamous and marriage occurs between them. The difference is that the *kwareth*, through their connection with the founder of the present Shilluk regime and their ritual importance to the people as a whole, are treated with special respect and have special privileges.

CENTRAL AND LOCAL ORGANISATION

The Reth

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The Shilluk people recognise one supreme head, the *reth*, who represents the country as a whole, regardless of territorial, social or kinship divisions. According to Shilluk tradition the present *reth* is thirty-first of the royal line which began with Nyikang, who led the Shilluk into their territory, conquered it, and established the social order. The spirit of Nyikang is thought to reside in every *reth* and to be passed from one to another down the line of his successors.(1)

The Settlement Chief

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The settlement chief is traditionally directly responsible to the *reth* and executes his orders. He has certain religious obligations to the *reth*, such as building a house at Fashoda or maintaining the local shrine of Nyikang. The chief settles disputes in his territory, endeavours to keep order and harmony and to lead in community matters. He is selected by the lineage heads of the settlement and not by the *reth* who merely recognises his authority and position by investing him with the *lau*, personally knotting this robe over the *jago*'s shoulder.

The Headman of the Hamlet

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The *jol dwong pur* has a status which varies according to whether he is headman of the principal hamlet of a lineage - in which case he is also a representative of his lineage within the settlement - or whether he is the headman of a subsidiary hamlet, in which case he is hamlet headman only and merely the senior member of a group of homesteads. The headman of a principal hamlet often receives a *lau*, sometimes directly from the *reth*, in other cases from the settlement chief. This, however, is only in confirmation and recognition of his status and there is no question of appointment by the *reth* or the *jago*. The headman of a principal hamlet represents

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, p.9.

his lineage in the settlement and, if he is a representative of the *dyil* lineage, he will have a special status as representing the owners of the land and the *jago* will treat him tactfully. The hamlet headman has charge of affairs within his unit and represents his people in external affairs.

The Gol Leader

The owner of a homestead is responsible for the unmarried members of his *gol*, but has no special status. The correspondence between territorial divisions and their representatives may be charted as below. (After Pumphrey, S.N.R. 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.7.)

TERRITORIAL DIVISIONS	REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORITY
Shilluk Tribe	The *Reth*
Lusk & Curr Provinces	Chiefs of Gol Nyikang & Gol Dhieng
Northern & Southern Marches	Chiefs of Ikumo & Tonga
.....Division (Lusk).....	.....Division or Court Chief.....
Settlement (*Fuoh*)	*Jago*
Hamlet (*Puc*)	*Jol dwong puc*
Homestead (*Gol*)	*Jol Gol*

(Dotted line indicates permanent administrative divisions with chiefs made by the Anglo-Egyptian Government. Previously, there were no permanent intermediate territorial units between the two provinces and marches and the settlements.)

THE *RETH'S* POLITICAL POWER

The actual degree of power possessed by the *reth* has been a matter for dispute among anthropologists. The majority of the early writers stressed his power and authority. Seligman writes, "The Shilluk king-is absolute lord temporal and spiritual.."(1) Westermann and others have said likewise. Evans-Pritchard and other recent writers suggest that in administrative matters, the *reth* is not so powerful.

The chiefs of settlements and the hamlet heads are confirmed in their offices by the *reth*. In no case, however, does he nominate them, for they are elected by the people of the units they represent in virtue of their positions as heads of lineages dominant in the area. Likewise the chiefs of the provinces and of the northern and southern marches are traditionally determined and persons who are eligible cannot be passed over for reasons of political expediency. On the other hand, the chiefs owe their *reth* certain duties and are responsible to him for the state of their districts and their inhabitants, for defence of the settlement area and for the collection of tribute. If there is a choice of candidates for any position, each having the necessary ability and lineage qualifications, it is conceivable that the *reth* might use his influence to have as chief the man most amenable to his wishes; otherwise he appears to have little chance of exerting influence on the choice of his local officials.

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p. 89.

LEGAL PROCEDURE

671 According to Hofmayr, Shilluk law "...is a law of tradition based on decisions of Nyikang and of previous kings."(1) He maintains that justice is very arbitrary and depends much on individual interpretation and custom. The settlement chief has a court to which are brought cases which the *gol* 672 leaders and the hamlet headmen feel unable to settle or which are too serious for them to judge. The accuser and accused appear before the settlement chief and the headman is often called as witness, while the elders assist. In major disputes, or if the settlement chief's decision is appealed against, the matter is brought before the *reth*. Hofmayr further states that important cases are treated by him and his judgement is final.(2)

681 In the courts compensation is awarded for homicide and fines in cattle or goats, according to the seriousness of the offence, are imposed for disputing the *reth*'s judgement, refusing to pay royal tribute, wounding a royal prince or princess, for theft, robbery and sexual offences. Apart from minor offences it would appear that offenders were brought to court and tried, not so much for private wrongs as for public delicts or crimes coming under the general category of breaking the *reth*'s peace, disputing the *reth*'s judgement, breaking the *reth*'s and Nyikang's laws.

693 Information suggests that in practice in the past the *reth*'s judicial 692 authority was by no means undisputed. Hofmayr maintains that an order or 691 judgement of the *reth*'s court was executed by the *reth*'s bodyguard, which 682 consisted of a number of youths who followed the king everywhere. According to the same authority "blood revenge is well known among the Shilluk and feuds do exist between persons, between families and also between villages."(3) The fine for homicide is 10 head of cattle; formerly a 680 girl was taken instead of cattle. According to both Seligman and Hofmayr, the *reth* kept the cattle but might give two or three cows to the family of the deceased as compensation. This practice is comparable to similar legal procedures in communities in which feuds still flourish and the central authority does not exercise very extensive political powers.

698 Intervention in a serious feud between two districts probably took the 695 form of the *reth* supporting one side against the other, and self-help, 692 sometimes back by the *reth*'s intervention, was possibly the means of obtaining compensation and settling disputes which were not willingly submitted by the two quarrelling parties to arbitration and the judgement of a court. On the other hand, a description of the settlement of a feud by Oyler suggests that the role of the *reth* is essentially that of peacemaker, but that his functions can only be exercised if the disputants are willing to make 711 peace.(4) In this respect it would appear that the role of the *reth* is comparable to that of other ritual and peacemaking functionaries among the Nilotes, such as the leopard-skin chief of the Nuer and the Dinka spear-chiefs.

(1) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, p.127.
(2) *Ibid.*
(3) *Ibid.*, p.102.
(4) Oyler, *S.W.J.* 1930, Vol.III, No.3, pp.296-99.

It would appear, therefore, that in judicial and administrative matters the Shilluk *reth* is far from being an over-riding or autocratic political authority. Local chiefs seem to be free to follow their own traditional courses without much interference. In actual powers of government and administration, and in personal prerogative, the *reth* may be little more than a mediator in disputes and perhaps the balancing force which decides a quarrel one way or another. It is in ritual matters that his real position and powers are indicated.

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THE RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RETH

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Evans-Pritchard writes: "Both his functions and his status are primarily of a ritual order. He makes sacrifices on important occasions, especially for rain and for victory in war, and it is his duty to provide cattle for the sacred herds of Nyikang at Nyilual and Wau and a canoe for Nyikang's shrine at Nyibodho.(1)

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It is noticeable that everywhere there is the closest connection between the political structure and the religious cult.

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(a) The territorial segments and their association with certain dominant lineages are explained in terms of the myth of Nyikang's division of the country among his followers who became the founding ancestors of many of the Shilluk clans.

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(b) The lineage heads who are chiefs of settlements have ritual duties to the kingship. They perform ceremonial services at the time of the *reth*'s investiture, are responsible for building huts in Fashoda and for the upkeep of Nyikang's shrines and those of past *reths*. The tombs of the dead kings are indistinguishable from the shrines of Nyikang and have the same ceremonial importance in rain-making ceremonies, harvest rituals and so forth.

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(c) The traditional customs of the people and the organisation of society in every way are considered to be the work of Nyikang directly or acting in the line of *reths*.

(d) The identification of Nyikang with the king is the central point of the Shilluk political, ritual and moral system. The people believe that Nyikang reigns and manifests himself in the *reth*. Nyikang is also the medium between the Shilluk and Juok - their chief spirit. The Shilluk consider the *reth* to be in close communication with the mystic forces of life, and Nyikang is the connecting link, participating in Juok as he does in the *reth*.(2)

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The *reth* is considered to come under the category of Divine Kings, as described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*. This is clear from the mode of his death and succession as well as from the duties he performs during his lifetime.

Succession of the Reth

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Only the son of a *reth* who has reigned is eligible, and a *nyireth* may

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, pp.16-17.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.19.

643 attempt to usurp the throne any time after killing the *reth*. The *reth*'s
644 sons and the sons of previous *reths* are potential rivals and are not
669 allowed within Fashoda at night. The *reth* takes precautions to avoid this danger. It is not known in which hut he sleeps and he is said to wander round at night looking for intruders. This practice of regicide no doubt accounts for the planting out of the *reth*'s sons from the time of their birth.

The Death of a Reth

649 The *reth* is considered to have some mystic connection with the world of nature, and the state of his health has an effect on the fertility of the land, on the rains, the harvests and on the general material and spiritual welfare of the people. If the *reth* becomes weak, the people suffer and he must be killed. If he were allowed to die naturally the spirit of Nyikang might be lost to the Shilluk for ever. There are a number of traditions relating to the traditional mode of death suffered by the *reth*. One maintains that the *reth* is strangled or suffocated by his wives if he shows signs of senility; another that he was walled up alive in a hut. The *reth* may be killed by a rival claimant to the throne at any time. Evans-Pritchard considers that the ceremonial putting to death [114] of kings is probably a fiction; there is no historical evidence for it and some Shilluk kings seem to have reigned until they were quite old. Both Howell and Evans-Pritchard consider that there is a close connection between the tradition of killing the king, because of the bad effects of his waning vitality, and the tradition that a rival claimant should seize the throne ".... we must interpret Shilluk statements about the matter as indicating not that any prince may slay the king on his own initiative, as has been suggested, but that any prince may lead a rebellion as the candidate of discontent, particularly of the part of the kingdom to which the prince belongs. If the king has lost support in the part to which he belongs he will probably lose also both the resulting contest and his life in it."(1) If this is so, the traditions of king-killing are perhaps an interpretation, couched in symbolic terms, of the actual course of events following a rebellion against the *reth*.

ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF THE RETH

[117] Detailed descriptions of the installation of a new *reth* have been given - apart from information by Nornol - by Howell and Thomson who were 643 in Shillukland at the election of King Fafiti Yor in 1943 and of his successor, King Anei in 1944. In the events described by them the political, ritual and symbolic nature of the *reth* and the importance of the Nyikang myths may be clearly seen. In addition, the relationships between the various social divisions and between the territorial and kinship segments may be perceived in action. The whole tribe participates in some degree, [64] for a series of ceremonies is carried out by the clans, in which each has a special traditional role to play.

The interregnum is a period of danger, owing to the war which may break out over the choice of a successor and owing to the absence of the

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, pp.34-5.

symbol of unity and cohesion. The main events are as follows:- 643

The funeral of the dead *reth* is carried out and is followed, a year later, by mortuary ceremonies and funeral dances. These events are chiefly a family affair and are organised by the *ororo* and the *kwareth*.

The election of the *reth* concerns the whole of the Shilluk people who are represented by the chiefs of the North and South Provinces. The *reth* is chosen from among the *nyireth* by an electoral college, composed of the descendants of the men who were, traditionally, made chiefs of the first degree by Nyikang when he parcelled out the country between eleven of his followers.(1) Three representatives from the *kwareth* are also included, but the *ororo* and *bung reth* have no representatives and take no part in the election although they are important in the ceremonies of installation. 643 666

Just as Shillukland is divided into two territorial divisions, Gerr and Luak, so for ritual purposes this structure is represented in special ritual terms. The Northern province becomes *Gol Dhiang*, the Southern province becomes *Gol Nyikang*. There is a rough correspondence between the two political and the two ritual divisions. The chiefs of the ritual divisions are the political chiefs of Golbany and Kwom, the two settlements just north and south of Fashoda. 182 631

The election of a particular *reth* must have the backing of the whole country, although at first sight it may appear that the choice lies with the chiefs of Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang. The election cannot take place unless they agree and this does not involve their own personal opinions solely. The other chiefs all take part and represent the views of each section of the country and if there is disagreement between the two provinces civil war may follow. Agreement is usually reached before the electoral college sits and formally proposes and elects the new *reth*. During the interval between the death of a *reth* and the election of his successor custom requires that all potential claimants should stay in their villages. This is the chance to seize the *reth*ship by force, if a candidate wishes to do so and has the necessary backing. Co-operation between the candidate and his settlement chief is essential for only the latter has the necessary force and only a *reth*'s son is eligible for the *reth*ship. Other chiefs join the rebels and fighting will begin. Until one side is defeated, or the *nyireth* is killed there will be civil war. 631 643 666 643 669

The Installation Ceremonies

Skins, ostrich feathers and the various trappings for the pageantry of the ceremonies are provided traditionally by certain clans and settlements. The principal shrine of Nyikang is at Akurwa, where he is believed to have disappeared in a storm. At his shrine are kept effigies of Nyikang and his son Duk. Into these effigies the spirits of Nyikang and Duk may enter at any time. On the death of a *reth* new images are made, for it is believed that Nyikang's spirit, formerly in the *reth*, transfers itself to the new effigy and remains there during the inter-regnum. At the installation 643 778

(1) Howell and Thomson, *S.N.R.*, 1946, Vol.XXVII, p.29.

643 778 of the newly elected *reth* Nyikang and Dak are brought in procession from Akurwa to Fashoda with their priests to test the new *reth*.

182 631 643 541 The conventional opposition between northern and southern divisions now becomes apparent. The forces of the southern province flock to support the *reth*-elect and wait at Dabalo settlement while Nyikang and his supporters assemble at Adodo. The two armies then march to Khor Arepajur and a mock battle takes place with millet stalks instead of spears. Nyikang captures the *reth*-elect and there is a procession to the shrine of Nyikang at Fashoda. Certain ceremonies of a mystic nature follow, which are not participated in by the whole people, as are the procession and battle. The image of Nyikang is placed on the royal stool, then the king-elect sits on it and the spirit of Nyikang is believed to enter into him, and possess him causing him to tremble.

A few days later a second mock battle occurs between the king's supporters and Nyikang. The *reth* is victorious, for Nyikang has taken possession of him and the effigy is now merely the symbol of Nyikang and no longer the repository of his spirit. . In a final ceremony all the important chiefs and elders from all parts of Shillukland declare their allegiance to the new *reth*.

182 643 The installation ceremonies of the *reth* and the traditions relating to Nyikang show how, at every point, the structure and political organisation of the Shilluk people is confirmed by ritual and by mystic symbols.

643 669 All rebellions and revolts are directed against the king in person and not against the kingship itself. The unity of the Shilluk is such that the various segments of the country can be represented by the common symbol of the *reth*-ship. Nevertheless, there are powerful tendencies towards fission within the structure. As has been shown, the kingship is the subject of competition on the part of the *nyireth* candidates supported by chiefs and forces available from their territories.

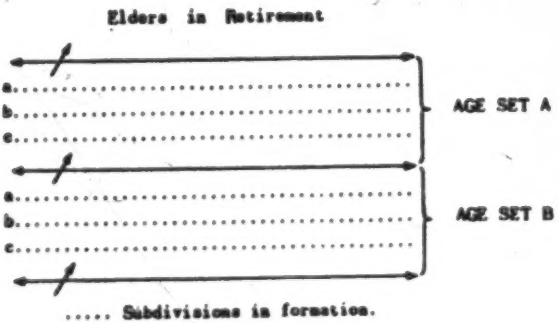
171 Of all the Nilotic groups for which there is any considerable information, the Shilluk alone form a single political unit, or nation, as opposed to a number of separate tribes or tribal groups which are culturally similar but not politically unified. At the same time, the principles of their political structure and social organisation are similar in many respects to those of the rest of the Nilotes, in particular the Anuak.

AGE SETS

114 Apart from a brief mention by Hofmayr, the only information concerning the Shilluk age sets is contained in Howell's article in *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1941, Vol.XXIV.

561 881 On reaching puberty a Shilluk boy is initiated into the age-set organisation. A Shilluk age set is known as *ric* and is made up of three or more subdivisions each consisting of men of approximately the same age, who have herded cattle together as boys. A man always remains in the subdivision into which he has been initiated, but a periodical shuffling of the subdivisions alters their respective positions in an age set and the whole age-set organisation. A reorganisation of the groups of subdivisions

thus occurs periodically. The subdivisions of any age set are known as 561
'head', 'neck' and 'middle'.



..... Subdivisions in formation.

As new subdivisions are continually being formed by initiated youths the immediate age set into which they enter grows too large. In addition the oldest subdivisions of the age set, comprising the married men and fathers, begin to die out or are ready for retirement. A new grouping of all the subdivisions is achieved by the *ngol* or cutting ceremony, when age sets are ceremonially divided into distinct units. The process is shown in the diagram. Surviving members of age set A (the older subdivisions) pass completely out of the age organisation into retirement. Older subdivisions of age set B pass into age set A to replace those retiring, while the most recently formed subdivisions pass for the first time into age set B. Thus, room is made for the formation of new subdivisions and there is a moving of subdivisions through the age sets or the formation of newly constituted age sets.

The retired age sets take no part in fighting or in ceremonies connected with the age-set organisation. The reshuffling occurs at the induction of the very young subdivisions, the members of which are anxious to have further privileges and a higher status. On ceremonial occasions the age sets have special parts of the animals killed, the highest age set eats the back and chest, the lower will eat the hump and legs only. According to Howell the regrouping of subdivisions is often the subject of much dispute, particularly between the two subdivisions which will be separated by the new line of division.

There are few occasions when the age set functions. At funerals the men are organised according to age sets as also at beer feasts when each sits in a special place and sings its own song. 764 504

Age sets emphasize the solidarity of the settlement by organising the generations within it. Each settlement unit has its own age-set organisation and there is no connection between the age sets of different settlements, though they all have similar forms and play similar parts in the settlement units. The age sets have little political importance, save that they constitute a bond of unity within the settlemnt, and this is clear 182 561 621

182 561 621 from the fact that the *jago*, elders of the *dyil* clan, and other lineage representatives, hold political authority quite apart from the age organisation. The age sets take no part in disputes within the settlement, but when the settlement as a whole goes to war the warriors "... are mobilised into age sets."(1) Howell suggests that formerly the age organisation had special military functions, but whether this was so or not, the age sets seem to fulfil a more peaceful purpose today, and form a useful basis for organising the relations of generations for social purposes.

The Ngol Ceremony

561 624 At the *ngol* ceremony a war leader (*bem*) is elected. The *bem* has no administrative or political functions. His duties consist in organising the mobilisation of the warriors and presiding at communal feasts at which people assemble in age sets. His age mates may assist him in his cultivations. After the *ngol* ceremony each age set is given a new name.

Initiation

561 881 There are no elaborate rites of initiation among the Shilluk. Participation in a dance, the *cong bul* marks the initiation of a youth in the age organisation. The *cong bul* is a social affair which is arranged periodically with the permission of the *jago* of the settlement. It is not a ceremony of initiation in the normal sense but merely a formal recognition by the community that a lad has reached adult status and can take part in a man's obligations and privileges. Previous to the *cong bul* a youth is restricted in that he may not fight with spears, take part in war or in any dance other than one held for children. Before the *cong bul* he is not allowed to wear certain kinds of ornaments.

The *cong bul* is attended by a boy when he is 14-16 years old, or earlier if he has to take over the duties of family head through the death of his father. A youth normally obtains his father's permission and another man is appointed to act as his sponsor. The sponsor ceremonially adorns the youth with ornaments before he enters the dance. At the beginning of the dance the warriors salute the *jago*, advance in formation and fling themselves before him.

[553 596] At the time of the *cong bul* the initiated is usually presented with two spears by his father. Rich men give their sons an ox and they take their ox-names from these animals. An ox so given is kept until it dies and then a new one of the same colour is substituted. After the *cong bul* the initiates visit relatives and travel round the countryside for a few months.

CLANS AND LINEAGES

614 There are about a hundred patrilineal clans in Shillukland. Each clan has a name which is preceded by the word *kwar*, meaning 'descendants of'. All clansmen trace their descent from a common ancestor. They are bound by distinct rules of behaviour, by special observances and are exogamous.(2)

613 614 The Shilluk clans, like all Nilotic clans, are dispersed, each clan

(1) Howell, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.57. (2) *Ibid.*, p.47.

having a great number of local branches, or lineages, spread throughout Shillukland, and there are no periodic reunions.

Members of a lineage are bound not only by kinship ties but also by ties arising through occupation of the same territory. The lineage is an effective political and social unit. A person generally thinks in terms of his localised lineage and refers most often to the founder of his lineage in the district occupied. In relation to members of lineages of other clans, however, reference is most likely to be made to the founding ancestor of a person's clan. As previously mentioned, the occupants of a settlement belong to a collection of independent lineages which graft themselves onto the genealogical structure of the dominant lineage through marriage with its female members.

INHERITANCE

Only the smallest lineage unit is of any importance in the inheritance of property. Pumphrey states that there are no definite rules for the inheritance of chattels.(1) If distribution has not been made before death they are usually taken by the eldest son, or by the next of kin where there are no sons. Cattle are taken by the succeeding *gol* leader, either a married son or a married brother. He cannot do exactly as he likes with them for he inherits certain traditional obligations. He has the moral obligation to use his herds for providing bridewealth to enable the male members of the *gol* to marry, in order of seniority, and it is considered wrong for a *gol* leader to marry a second time himself while there are men of his *gol* still unmarried and requiring cattle. The *gol* leader is also responsible for paying compensation in cattle for any wrong which has been committed by one of his household. Finally, it is recognised that no cattle of the family herds should be sold except in times of famine and to purchase grain. Pumphrey states that a breach of these terms of trust would "be universally censured but would probably not be interfered with by the courts."(2)

Uncultivated land belongs to anyone who settles on it.

MARRIAGE

The Shilluk are polygynous; a wealthy and influential man has three or four wives, while members of the *kwareth* may have several more. Marriage is forbidden with any member of one's father's clan and between all persons in respect of whom relationship, either through the father or mother, could be traced directly. Apart from these obstacles it appears that freedom of choice is generally allowed to both sexes in matrimonial matters.

Bridewealth

Bridewealth consists of ten head of cattle and sheep and spears. In addition the suitor makes small gifts and performs services to win the favour of his future father- and mother-in-law. Bridewealth discussions and arguments proceed between representatives appointed by the suitor's *gol* and by the girl's *gol*.

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.24.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.23.

583 and by the girl's *gol*. Payment of cattle may extend over many years and, until these payments are completed, the girl lives with her parents and her husband has to visit her there.

The bridewealth cattle go to the girl's *gol* leader, who is either her father, brother or paternal uncle. Pumphrey states that the maternal uncle only receives cattle if there are any arrears outstanding from the marriage of his sister, the girl's mother. Seligman quotes an instance in which 17 cattle were paid by a Dinka and of them 10 went directly to the girl's mother's family.

Marriage Ceremonies

584 If a girl receives a proposal of marriage from a suitor and accepts
585 him, the first step is to obtain the consent of the girl's *gol*. The acceptance of a sheep - the *dyel dhok* - by the girl's parents signifies that they consent to the engagement. According to Pumphrey, the marriage is regarded as valid and binding as soon as this has taken place, and children born to the couple are legitimate even if the cattle payments have not been completed.(1)

A beer-brewing and wedding dance at the bride's village follow and serve to publicise the marriage and express public approval and recognition. After the dance a long period may elapse during which the bridewealth is gradually paid off while the wife lives with her parents. The final ceremony, the *nogho thiek*, marks the separation of the wife from her parents' home and only takes place when all the bridewealth has been paid, or at least the major part of it. Sometimes a mock battle takes place in which the bride is symbolically seized by the groom's party.

There is no set order for the various stages in completing a marriage, for there are often complications, such as seduction or the inability of
[684] the man to pay the cattle and so forth. In cases of seduction the seduction fine has to be paid first and then the full bridewealth.

Divorce

586 If a wife refuses to live with her husband her parents have to return the bridewealth. Deductions are made for the children born of the union at the rate of two head of cattle for every son and five for each daughter. Similarly, if a woman marries another man, before the first suitor has paid all the bridewealth, the cattle which have been paid are given back, subject to the deductions for any children born, because, once the sheep has been accepted, any children of the union belong legally to their father.

587 If the wife dies her *gol* must either substitute an unmarried sister or give back the bridewealth, making deductions for children.

Sexual Offences

684 Fines for adultery are paid to the woman's husband. The amount varies,

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* Vol.XXIV, 1941, p.26.

but the usual fine for making another man's wife pregnant consists of three cows and one bull; if pregnancy does not result the fine is two head of cattle. Fines for seduction are paid to the girl's father and vary from one to three head of cattle according to whether or not the girl is made pregnant. If a woman has committed adultery, she confesses it at the time of childbirth; her husband then exacts the appropriate fines from the men concerned.

If children have been born outside marriage the eventual husband may take them over and will pay extra bridewealth cattle. Failing this, they are brought up in the *gol* of their maternal uncle and belong to his clan. He will receive the bridewealth paid on the marriage of the girls.(1)

Widow Inheritance

According to Westermann widows are inherited by the brothers of the dead husband or by his sons, who take the wives who are not their own mothers. He then adds that, if children are begotten from these wives, they belong to the family of the dead man and "they are like his own children."(2) This custom of raising up seed to the name of the dead man is general among the Nilotic tribal groups.

KINSHIP AND KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

Ora

The in-law relationship of *ora* has been commented on by Seligman and Pumphrey. It appears to have two particular applications, being used in a narrow and in a wider sense.

A man describes as *ora* all his wife's kinsmen and, strictly, all the kinsmen of the wives of the men of his own generation belonging to his own clan. This extension may be because he is allowed, at any rate in theory, to have access to the wives of such clansmen and temporarily takes over the in-law relationship with their parents. During the first years of marriage the members of the husband's *gol* have to respect and to avoid the members of the wife's *gol*. Pumphrey suggests that the basic reason for this is that the initial period of marriage is an unstable one and friction is gradually resolved as the bridewealth is paid off and children are born. To avoid friction the husband does not speak to his *ora* and meets them as little as possible.

In a wider sense the *ora* tie is connected with certain sex taboos. The breach of these taboos is believed to cause *dwalo* sickness, a form of illness believed to affect both mother and child who will die unless the man who induced the mother to break the taboo will split a gourd in two and sacrifice a sheep.(3) There are certain *ora* relationships between lineages and one lineage will be *ora* to another. Thus, if men of lineage A have married women of lineage B, C and D, there are *ora* relationships between A and B; A and C; A and D. In such a case no men of lineages B, C and D

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, pp.34-5.
(2) Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, 1912, p.114.
(3) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.29.

could marry women from lineage A as this would prevent the correct working of the relationship of avoidance and would confuse the situation. Each lineage therefore develops a tendency to marry women of some other specific lineage,(1) but this is a traditional convention only and not compulsory.

In addition to the ordinary *ora* relationship between two lineages it is dangerous for a man to have sexual relations with a member of a lineage which is *ora* in the second degree. B, C and D may have an *ora* relationship, through customary intermarriage, with other lineages, E, F, G and H. If a man of lineage A seduced a girl of lineage E then all the men of lineage B would be offended, since they regard marriage with girls of E as their prerogative, and there is an *ora* relationship between the two lineages as there is through A and B. *Dwalo* sickness would result from the offence in the same way as if a man had relations with a woman who was a blood relation.

Terminology

Pumphrey gives a list of Shilluk kinship terms,(2) among which may be noted the absence of any single word for brother, such a kinsman being described as father's son or mother's son. The Shilluk kinship terms used to describe members of the immediate family are extended to others of the same generation, and from this descriptive terminology a classificatory system is formed.

RITUAL AND OTHER CULTURAL FEATURES

There are three major aspects of Shilluk belief and ritual; the recognition and worship of Juok, the cult of Nyikang and the kings in whom he has been reincarnated, and the cult of the ancestral spirits. In addition there are less important beliefs such as the belief in the spirits of the bush and river.

JUOK

The concept of Juok is found in many of the Nilotic tribal groups although beliefs concerning it vary. Among the Shilluk Juok refers to a spirit which is universal, formless and invisible like the air. Juok is above Nyikang and men though he is approached principally through Nyikang. The Shilluk perform sacrifices to Nyikang which cause him to move Juok to send rain, to prevent misfortune, remove sickness and so forth. Juok is so linked to Nyikang that he is seldom approached in prayer without mention of the latter as intercessor. Juok is vaguely associated with the firmament and is recognised as creator though he is believed to show little interest in men owing to his greatness which is so far above them.

Hofmayr(3) states that the Shilluk put adjectives to the word Juok in order to bring out one or other of his attributes:

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.30. (2) *Ibid.*, pp.37-9.
(3) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, pp.186-7 and p.193.

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Juok *Ficere*, means a whirlwind;
Juok *Nam*, " river spirit;
Juok *Acweci*, " creator;
Jame Juok, " things made by Juok such as food etc.;
Juok *Tin*, " wood spirit;
Juok *Ayin*, " protector.

Anything that cannot be understood is Juok. Juok is thus a plurality but he is also one spirit; he may be either good or bad, or neither, he is potentially all three. He may bring sickness, may protect people or he may merely stand aloof from human affairs. Certain diseases are specifically associated with him. The cult of Juok is not expressed in any external action or ritual; it is found in a few songs and prayers, and Juok is invoked only when appeals to the ancestors and to Nyikang fail. [753]

THE CULT OF NYIKANG

Nyikang is the hero of most of the Shilluk myths and traditions. He is the culture hero, founder of the nation, and the popular ideal, and though probably an historical person in the first instance, his acts and words have become sacralised in myths. The Shilluk regard him as a divine or semi-divine being. They say he did not die but disappeared in a whirlwind during a festival held at Akurwa. The spirit of Nyikang is supposed to be present in certain places, men and animals. Every *reth* at the moment of his installation, when sitting on the royal stool, is possessed by the spirit of Nyikang so that it is Nyikang who becomes king again (see above). The spirit of Nyikang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are regarded as his homesteads; in particular he is present, at certain times, in his effigy at Akurwa.

There are ten shrines of Nyikang in Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenyikang. Seligman describes them as a group of two or more huts, of the same circular form as dwelling-huts but slightly larger, enclosed in a fence of millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which projects the blade of a spear.(1) The huts are taboo to all except the priests of Nyikang and the old people who tend them. The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the shrines to Nyikang are known as *bareth*; they are the ex-wives of kings, people liable to epileptic fits (which are held to indicate possession by Nyikang or a dead king), and certain old men who appear, according to Seligman, to have a hereditary connection with the shrine. The *bareth* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices and officiate at the ceremonies. They eat the meat of the sacrifices and drink the milk of the cattle belonging to the shrine. 346 778 778 793

The worship of Nyikang at his various shrines consists of sacrifices and prayers. The two most important annual ceremonies are the rain-making ceremony, held just before the rains, and the harvest festival, when the millet is cut and first-fruits are offered to Nyikang. Each new *reth* should send cattle to each shrine of Nyikang and also various other presents. Offerings are given at the shrines when a person is sick so that Nyikang should make him well. Offerings and ceremonies invoking Nyikang's aid are 778 782

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.77.

made at all times of stress and misfortune. Everything round a shrine is sacred, especially trees - they are particularly rare in Shillukland in any case.

Certain Shilluk kings, particular incarnations of Nyikang, tend to be identified with particular species of animals. If such an animal approaches the shrine without signs of fear, it is assumed to be the form in which Nyikang appears, and a sacrifice is offered at the shrine. Almost any unusual behaviour on the part of an animal would lead the Shilluk to look on it as a temporary incarnation of Nyikang. Nyikang's mother, Nikaive, is reputed to have been a crocodile and is believed to live in the river in that form. A sacrifice is made to her by throwing a live sheep into the river. The crocodile is generally spared even though these creatures are a danger in river crossings.

There is a limited cult of the Dinka spirit Dengait, and also a belief in the spirits of the bush and river.

THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

Beliefs concerning the ancestral spirits are vague. Reference is made to *pan juok*, 'the country of the dead', which is reached by the spirit after long wandering through the bush, but it is also believed that the spirit persists in or around the grave. Offerings and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirits by the head of a household or local lineage on behalf of the descendants. If there is sickness or misfortune or the possibility of danger, a person will pray to his ancestors and make an animal sacrifice to propitiate them.

The ancestral cult seems, however, to be overshadowed by the national cult of Nyikang and the royal ancestors.

TOTEMIC BELIEFS

Seligman suggests that Shilluk totemism may have been derived from the Dinka because it seems so slight and unimportant. According to Hofmayr and Westermann the clans appear to have totems and some clans derive themselves from an animal or fish which Nyikang took and turned into people in order to populate the country. Hofmayr states that totem animals are often killed but it is considered wrong to eat them.(1) Most totems are animals but a few are plants. Children inherit their totems from their fathers; a woman keeps hers even when she is married.(2)

MAGICAL PRACTICES

The Witchdoctor (Ajuago)

Ajuago means 'man of Juok'. Such people are regarded as possessing certain magical powers which they use for the good of the community. People go to them when they are in need of help and pay them for their assistance. The powers of the *ajuago* are believed to be due to their

(1) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, p.235.
(2) *Ibid.*

periodic possession by the spirit of the early Shilluk kings. The guardians of the shrines of Nyikang may or may not be *ajuago*, for mere connection with a shrine does not automatically make a man an *ajuago*.

According to Seligman when a man becomes an *ajuago* he becomes ill and has dreams. On consulting one who is already in the profession, he is told that he has in him a spirit of one of the early kings. Special ceremonies are performed, the habits and skills marking an *ajuago* are acquired, and the man begins to practise in his professional capacity. The power is frequently hereditary and a son or daughter or even a remote relative may become possessed. All witchdoctors live celibate lives whether they are male or female. According to Seligman an *ajuago* marries wives and others beget children for him.(1) Many witchdoctors are specialists in some branch of magic but some have general powers. Some of the main tasks performed by them are: to give safety on a journey, to bring success in hunting, to bring victory in war, and to detect those who will be killed in a fight and forestall their deaths. They are believed to have the power of curing disease and also to kill by magic. The witchdoctors are essential to the community as diviners and they have the ability to ward off evil spirits and bad magic. Very often an *ajuago* possesses a 'gourd of Juok', which is a gourd with a handle upon which is an iron band. The gourd is greased and some grain is put in it. When it is shaken the grain rattles and that is presumed to be Juok talking. The gourd is kept in the *ajuago*'s house and is consulted for purposes of divination.(2)

Many of the witchdoctors exert a powerful influence over the people and, in consequence of the fees they receive, are usually prosperous.

The Jalyat

The *jalyat*, 'the man of herbs', is a sorcerer dealing essentially in bad magic, as opposed to the good magic of the *ajuago*. The *jalyat* is greatly feared. He works in secret at night so that the Shilluk are never sure who is a *jalyat*, though they will kill anyone whom they suspect of practising sorcery.

The *jalyat* is thought of as being a somorchid and, as such, he should be drowned at birth. The father alone has the power to save his son. When a sorcerer has reached maturity he cannot be killed openly unless the people of his village determine to rid themselves of the evil they believe him to be causing. The power is not considered to be hereditary. The sorcerer, in practising his evil arts, uses parts of his victim's body or things closely associated with him. He makes mud effigies and pierces them or puts them in a fire and is believed by these means to destroy the persons they represent. A sorcerer may cause sickness, bring misfortune by ruining crops, by causing cattle to go barren and so forth. Sorcerers work against children in a large family and certain accidents and deaths may be caused by their machinations. The basis of the sorcerer's intentions is considered to be envy of the successful and the prosperous, whom he therefore endeavours to injure.

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.101.
(2) Oyler, *S.N.R.*, 1920, Vol.III, No.1, p.114.

754 If a man knows that he is being bewitched he can get the witchdoctor to counteract the bad magic and save him. When he gets old the sorcerer may hire out his powers to help people.(1) It is a serious offence to accuse a man of being a sorcerer unless it can be proved, and an accuser may be heavily fined. A sorcerer must be caught in the act if he is to be legitimately killed.

The Deiyet

Deiyet appear to be the feminine equivalents of the *jolyet*. They are not regarded as being as evil and serious in intent as the *jolyet*.

The Evil Eye (Twop)

The Shilluk believe firmly in the power of the evil eye and that it is inherited, passing from a parent (male or female) to the children. It may also come suddenly upon a person. Those who possess it try to conceal the power from others.(2) Envy, jealousy or anger causes people with this power to bring illness or misfortune on others who are richer and more fortunate than themselves. The *ajwogo* can counteract the effects of the evil eye by prayer, sacrifice and countermagic.(3)

LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

844 About three months before her first child is born, a woman leaves her husband and returns to her parents' *gol* for the birth.(4) Immediately after the birth the mother is exhorted to confess all her previous love affairs to the woman acting as midwife and it is believed that were she not to do so she and the baby would die. The child is shown to the father and his friends who wish to see that it is not a monorchid or deformed in any way. In the former case, the child would probably be killed, for it is believed that monorchids grow up to be sorcerers.(5) Cleansing ceremonies are carried out a few days after birth. It is considered wrong to have another child before the previous one has been weaned.

846 852

845 Twins are welcomed by the Shilluk. They are called *nwolo jwok* 'children of god' and have special names. Many ceremonies occur after the birth of twins.

853 Names are given soon after birth and usually refer to some incident which has occurred in the family. The birth name is retained throughout life, although an ox-name and other names are taken later.

DEATH AND FUNERAL CEREMONIES

774 According to Seligman every living man has both a *wei* and a *tipo*. The *wei* is breath or life, the *tipo*, shadow or image. In addition, the

(1) Oyler, *S.O.S.* Vol.II, 1919, No.3, p.121. (2) *Ibid.*
(3) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, p.221. (4) *Ibid.*, p.271.
(5) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.70.

In addition, the

Shilluk believe in ors which is thought to be the malevolent element that persists after the death of one who has died with a grievance and is angry at some wrong that has been done to him.(1) They also speak of ororo, meaning a bird, but Seligman was unable to discover what this meant.

A dead body is buried at full length, a few paces from the door of the house in which the deceased lived. The grave is usually dug by elderly male relatives. The body is wrapped in skins, and sacrifices of oxen, goats and fowls are made after the burial, according to the family wealth. The mourners bathe in the river; no food taboos are laid on them but they shave their heads and do not wear ornaments or go to dances during the period of mourning. After a month has passed the mortuary ceremonies are held, a number of sacrifices are made and beer is brewed for the mortuary feast. According to Westermann the horns of an ox are often placed on the grave.(2)

THE ANUAK

Detailed information on the Anuak is derived almost entirely from two articles by Evans-Pritchard.

ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

The Anuak are, like the Shilluk, a riverain people and their villages are distributed along the banks of rivers in the Eastern Sudan and in Ethiopia. In the western regions of Anuakland the ecological conditions are somewhat different from those in the east. The western areas are true savannah, flat, almost treeless grassland, which is flooded in the wet season. In the east there is forest savannah which gradually turns into tropical rain forest. In the rainy season the western half of Anuakland is cut off from the eastern half by deep water-courses and swamps. These factors have had considerable repercussions on the political organization of the country and largely determine the distribution of the villages and the economy.

In the savannah areas of the west, villages are built on rocky ground at the edge of the flood plains and the occupants may have to move during the rainy season for fishing, fresh pastures and for drinking water. Villages built some miles back from the river (owing to flooding during the rains), also have to move. For such villages there is a wet-season village site and a dry-season village site. The regions in the west are thinly populated; small independent villages are strung out 5-20 miles apart and often with swamps and rivers in between so that in the wet season a village community may be completely cut off from the rest of the country for several months. In certain localities, as along the Gila river, villages are surrounded by dense beds of reeds and it is impossible to reach them except by the few paths available. Such villages are very difficult to attack. Where the villages of the savannah areas are not protected by these banks of reeds they are, or were in the past, protected by stockades and moats, the homesteads being closely wedged together owing to the lack of space on the mound occupied.

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.97.
(2) Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, 1912, p.115.